

Accountability Measures

During the interim, the Postsecondary Education Policy and Budget Subcommittee (PEPB), in the process of recommending executive consideration of funding for \$2.5 million funding for expanded need-based scholarships, recommended that accountability measures be applied to this appropriation.¹

Given the complexity of the student assistance/financial aid programs across the university system, the legislature may want to consider adding an accountability measure that would require a report to the legislature should any of the following decision packages be approves:

In Executive Budget...Apply Accountability Measures to:

- DP 2002 - Governor's Postsecondary Scholarship (Program 02) – The executive budget adds \$3.3 million in the 2009 biennium budget in order to fund additional scholarship awards as part of the Governor's Postsecondary Scholarship Program, approved as HB 435 by the 2005 legislature and codified at 20-26-601, MCA.
- DP 2061 – Governor's Scholarship Program Expansion (Program 02) – The executive budget increases general fund by \$750,000 in the 2009 biennium to expand the availability of financial need based scholarships that respond to workforce demands by targeting more scholarships to the high demand occupations in healthcare, technology and the building trades. These high demand occupations scholarships would support students attending the Colleges of Technology, community colleges, and tribal colleges. In addition, the executive proposes increases in four-year merit scholarships for graduating Montana high school students.
- DP 9008 – Tuition Waivers – High School Honors Program (OTO) (Program 09) - The executive budget funds the cost of tuition waivers associated with the High School Honors Program with \$1 million general fund in the 2009 biennium.

Proposed Accountability Measure (in a companion bill to HB 2):

HB 2 funding for the Montana University System includes funding for a report to the education and local government interim committee by August 2008 that includes:

- A comprehensive plan to coordinate all student financial aid components (e.g. Baker, MHEG, Pell, LEAP, SLEAP, Governor's Scholarship Program, MPACT, tuition waivers, MUS Honors Scholarship, work study, Perkins Loan, etc.) that seeks to ensure that all programs comprise an integrated system of student financial aid that can accomplish the shared policy goals of affordability approved by the interim postsecondary education policy and budget subcommittee
- The impact that all student assistance programs in this plan have on progress toward Board of Regents 2006-2010 Strategic Plan Goal I(2), to "make higher education more affordable by offering more need-based financial aid and scholarships" in the following measures:
 - Reduce the gap between expected family contribution and average cost of attendance
 - Increase the percentage of students who receive financial aid or scholarships
 - Increase the average aid/scholarship award amount

¹ Initiative DP #2: Improve Affordability (restricted, biennial, OTO)

The PEPB recommends a restricted, biennial, one-time-only general fund appropriation of \$2.5 million to support the MPACT scholarship financial aid/student assistance program at university educational units across the Montana University System.

This one-time-only appropriation may become an ongoing appropriation in the subsequent 2011 biennium budget contingent upon a report to the PEPB by August 2008 that demonstrates progress toward the following accountability measures:

- completion of a comprehensive plan that coordinates all student financial aid components (e.g. Baker, MHEG, Pell, LEAP, SLEAP, Governor's Scholarship Program, MPACT, tuition waivers, MUS Honors Scholarship, work study, Perkins Loan, etc.) so that all programs comprise an integrated system of student aid that can accomplish the Shared Policy goals of affordability
- that this comprehensive, integrated student aid program has increased the average state funded need-based aid award to each student by \$ 70 per capita (from \$71 to \$141), which is equal to a 100% increase
- that this comprehensive, integrated student aid program will increase retention and completion rates for the targeted need-based aid students by _____%

Approved by PEPB at meeting on Monday, June 1, 2006

Student Assistance Accountability Measures (DP 2002, DP 2061 & DP 9008)

The Board of Regents adopted the following goal and objectives related to student assistance:

Goal I (2): Make higher education more affordable by offering more need-based financial aid and scholarships.

Objectives:

- 1) Reduce the gap between Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and average cost of attendance.
- 2) Increase the percentage of students who receive financial aid or scholarships.
- 3) Increase the average aid / scholarship award amount.

By August 2008, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education shall report to the Education interim committee regarding improvements and progress in relation to the objectives presented above.

By August 2008, the Office of the Commissioner will also study the various components of student financial aid, both federal and state, with a goal of recommending improvements with respect to further coordination of financial aid to Montana students.